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great variety of species, common to different countries, which possess the same characteristics as the ibis, but it has been doubted whether the bird which the Egyptians worshiped as divine is really known at the present day.

The inquiries of the learned have, however, satisfactorily answered the question. The researches of Savigny and Cuvier were not without result. The catacombs of Thebes and Memphis have disclosed the secret. The mummies, which long ago were so carefully prepared by the wise men of Egypt, have afforded the means of ascertaining the nature of the deified bird. It appears that there are two species, perfectly distinguished from one another. They are those which ornithologists designate under the names of the white ibis (*ibis religiosa*) and the black or green ibis (*ibis falcinella*).

The white ibis, or sacred ibis, has a full robust body, the head and neck denuded of feathers, the tail short. The general plumage is clear, spotless white, with the exception of the tips of the quill-feathers, which are generally black, reflecting a bright violet or green. Travellers have observed this species on the banks of the Nile, and it is identical with the white ibis represented in old Egyptian sculptures and found in Egyptian tombs.

The black or green ibis is of a black plumage, which reflects in certain lights a green or violet colour. This bird is found in Europe, India, and the United States. It received, as well as the sacred ibis, divine honours, but is less frequently found among the mummies.

The ibis dwells in society. They are found in flocks of six or eight; the flocks of the black ibis sometimes exceed thirty or forty. The parent birds carefully build the nest for the young, and rear the little ones with the utmost solicitude, so that poets have celebrated them as models of tenderness and fidelity, whose love is only destroyed by death. Their habits are peaceable and affectionate. In youth the neck is partially covered with down or small feathers of a blackish tint, which fall off when the plumage is mature, leaving the head and neck bare, which with the beak and feet, are black.

Bruce was the first who broke through the popular errors respecting the ibis, and made it quite clear to all, that the true sacred ibis, such as was of old worshiped in Egypt,—such as is still found in the mummy-pitchers, represented in the pictures discovered at Herculaneum, and sculptured on ancient medals and vases,—was no other than the bird known by the name of Abou-Hannes, or Father John, of modern Egypt. Speaking of two mummies taken from the pits of Saccara, Cuvier says:—"On carefully exposing them, we perceived that the bones of the embalmed bird were much smaller than those of the *tantalus ibis* of Linnæus; that they did not much exceed those of the curlew in size; that its beak resembled that of the latter, being only a little shorter in proportion to its thickness, and not at all like that of the *tantalus*; and lastly, that its plumage was white, with the quills marked with black, as the ancients have described it. We found, after some inquiries, that the mummies of the ibis which had been opened before, by different naturalists were similar to ours."

It seems that the errors once prevalent regarding the ibis arose from that strange story of Herodotus about the bird's devouring flying serpents. It was thought that a bird which could do this must be strong and powerful, and armed with a large beak; and naturalists therefore sought for the bird among such as possessed these characteristics. Cuvier, without arguing the truth of the story, says:—"Positive proofs, such as descriptions, figures, and mummies, ought to preponderate always over accounts of habit too often imagined without any other motive than to justify the different worships rendered to animals." "It might," he says, "be added, that the serpents from which the ibis delivered Egypt are represented to us as very venomous, but not as very large. I have even obtained direct proofs that the birds preserved as mummies, and which have had a beak precisely similar to that of our bird, were true serpent-eaters; for I found in one of their mummies the still undigested remains of the skin and scales of serpents."

MATTHIOLI:—THE IRON MASK.

THE mystery which, for more than a century and a half, has enveloped the identity of the "Man of the Iron Mask," has been one of the most active sources of public curiosity throughout the whole period which has passed since his time. Numerous theories have been put forward, all with some semblance of probability, yet all unsatisfactory. Only one solution of the mystery, however, is supported by sufficient evidence to entitle it to acceptance. It is the result of M. Delort's examination of the archives of the French government, in which he found the correspondence of the French ministers of that time, which proved, beyond a doubt, that the mysterious prisoner was an Italian of the name of Matthioli.

This individual, about whose fate so much romantic interest has been excited, was secretary of state to Charles, third duke of Mantua, by whom he was much favoured. Towards the end of the year 1677, the Abbé d'Estrades, ambassador from Louis XIV. to the republic of Venice, was anxious to induce the Duke of Mantua to allow the entrance of a French garrison into Casale, which was, in a great measure, the key of Italy. D'Estrades thought to effect his purpose by gaining over Matthioli to his schemes. The secretary readily lent himself to the accomplishment of the wily ambassador's object, and wrote a letter to the abbé in which he offered to devote himself entirely to the interests of the French king. In the course of the treaty between Louis and the duke, it was proposed to send Matthioli to the French court. This arrangement did not meet with the approbation of D'Estrades, who used his best efforts to delay the secretary's journey to Paris. He succeeded in postponing it from spring to autumn, when Matthioli arrived at the French capital about the end of November, 1678. His stay was short; after an interview with Louis, who received him with much favour and gave him a ring of great value, as an earnest of his future gifts, the Italian returned to Mantua. The advance of the French troops to garrison Casale caused great alarm to the neighbouring states. Remonstrances were made to Charles, which his secretary secretly supported, though he continued to be the apparent ally of the French agents at the ducal court. His duplicity, however, could not long be concealed; and suspicions of his fidelity to the interests of Louis strengthened into actual evidence of his treachery. The French ambassador reproached and threatened, but to no purpose; the unprincipled secretary, in the very face of his proved unfaithfulness, still assured the agents of Louis of his firm adherence to their master's interests, but informed them that the Duke of Mantua had been obliged to conclude a treaty with the Venetians, the object of which was directly opposed to that entered into with the French. M. Pinchesne, the French agent at Venice, though convinced of the perfidy of Matthioli, did not break with him, but advised him to go and confer with D'Estrades at Turin: the secretary followed this advice, and thus fell into the plot which had been concocted for his ruin.

Disappointed in his political intrigues, the vindictive Louis had resolved to take signal vengeance on the treacherous frustrator of his plans. He accordingly sent orders to the abbé to arrest Matthioli, and guard him in such a manner, "that not only may he not have communication with any one else, but that he may have cause to repent of his own bad conduct." During his negotiations with D'Estrades at Turin, Matthioli complained to the abbé of want of money; the ambassador readily caught at a circumstance so favourable to the execution of the plan which he had to accomplish, and recommended him to meet Catinat at the French frontiers, near Pignerol, where D'Estrades would also be present. The doomed secretary again aided in the accomplishment of his own ruin by doing as the abbé suggested. Three miles from the place of rendezvous they were stopped by a river, the bridge of which had been a short time before broken down by a flood. Matthioli himself assisted to repair the bridge over which he was to pass into the most hopeless and wretched of all captivities. Being questioned at the conference with Catinat, he informed those present where all the original papers relative to the delivery of

Casale would be found, though it seems that the statement then made in reference to these documents was false, as they were afterwards discovered concealed in a well at Padua. At the end of the conference he was arrested without ceremony, and after his arrest no one was permitted to approach him. The most extraordinary precautions were taken to prevent his discovery, particularly that of obliging him to wear a mask during his journey when he saw any one, to conceal this violent breach of the law of nations, Matthioli being at this time plenipotentiary of the Duke of Mantua for concluding a treaty with France; and the same reasons for concealment existed till his death, since that event happened while both Louis and the Duke of Mantua were still alive. This accounts for his confinement being always solitary and secret; one act of diplomatic treachery, however, could never warrant the infliction of the most horrible of all punishments, solitary confinement, attended by such rigours as his were, for twenty-four years in a dungeon; but Louis, whether as a man or a sovereign, was one of the most cruel and tyrannical characters to be met with in the whole range of history.

For the first few days of his imprisonment Matthioli was well treated, but his gaoler afterwards received instructions to the effect, that "It is not the intention of the king that *Sieur de Lestang*,"—the name given to him,—"should be well treated, nor that, except the absolute necessities of life, should he have anything given to him that may make him pass his time agreeably." Repeated injunctions, to this effect, are a proof how much importance the rancorous Louis attached to his victim's being compelled to drink his bitter draught of captivity to the very dregs. The harshness of his treatment and the utter hopelessness of relief or liberty seem to have affected the intellect of Matthioli, as his gaoler reports that in his frenzy and despair the wretched prisoner used to give way to the most violent paroxysms of mental derangement, during which he found vent for his rage by writing with charcoal abusive sentences upon Louis on the walls of his prison. A mad Jacobin monk, who was confined in the same prison, was put into the cell with Matthioli, but died after their removal to another and more wretched prison at Exilles. After the death of the monk, Matthioli was again removed to the island of St. Margaret, on the coast of Provence. During the journey he was conveyed in a chair covered with oilcloth, that the possibility of his being seen or spoken to might be prevented.

It was during this journey, there is reason to believe, that the permanent use of the mask, which he was afterwards compelled to wear till his death, began. This mask was not made, as has been erroneously supposed, of iron, but of black velvet, strengthened with whalebone, and fastened behind by a padlock.

Amongst the anecdotes given of this prisoner, who has so long been the object of so much general curiosity, it has been mentioned that he wrote his name and rank with the point of a knife on a silver plate and threw it out of his window, and that it was picked up by a fisherman, who brought it to the gaoler. The fisherman, having satisfied the man that he could not read, was released. Again, it is said that he covered one of his shirts with writing, and threw it also out of his window, and that a monk having found it, took it to the governor of the prison, with a declaration that he had not read it, but two days afterwards he was found dead in his bed.

After eleven years' confinement at St. Margaret's, Matthioli was removed to the Bastille. The same secrecy as before prevailed during his journey to Paris. At dinner he sat with his back to the light, and his gaoler opposite to him, with a brace of pistols on the table. While at the Bastille, he was on a few occasions allowed to go to mass, but the guards had strict orders to shoot him if he spoke to any one. At length he died, at the age of sixty-three, after five years most rigorous confinement in a dungeon of the Bastille. After his death, everything was done that could destroy all traces of his former existence: his clothes were burnt, as well as the furniture of his cell: all plate of every kind was melted down, the walls of the dungeon were scraped and then whitewashed, the floor was newly paved, the old ceiling taken down, the doors and windows burnt, and every corner most rigidly searched.

It has been stated, on more than one authority, that Louis XV. well knew who the celebrated state prisoner really was, and affirmed more than once that he was the minister of one of the Italian princes; but this confession was considered at the time only as an evasion to put a stop to a more rigid inquiry. But let the unhappy victim be whom he might, the atrocious and persevering revenge of which he was the object deserves the heartiest execration of all future posterity. His perfidy may have been great, but outraged humanity will not accept it as palliation or excuse for the barbarous and continued cruelties which he suffered at the hands of the execrable Louis.

THE PROSCRIBED ROYALIST.—BY MILLAIS.

To paint history, whether with the pen or pencil, it is not merely necessary to describe circumstances with minute accuracy of detail, telling us how the event referred to began, who was present, who took part in it, what they wore, how they looked, and how it ended. This, after all, is but a kind of imitation—a faithful rendering of costume, and of features as far as anything is known of them—though valuable when joined with talents of a still higher order, which come into play in the grouping, expression, &c. But this alone does not give one a vivid picture of the state of society, of the prevailing notions and tendency of the popular mind, of the position of parties, and their prejudices and passions. The first man in Great Britain who looked at history with the eye of an artist, grasped all its leading features without dwelling painfully upon minutiae, and yet, with marvellous truth, blended them into a picture of surpassing beauty, was Sir Walter Scott.

Now we want some one to do for history with the pencil what Scott has done for it with the pen, to give the idea of truth, and not merely ideas of imitation. In the "Proscribed Royalist," an engraving of which appears on the following page, Mr. Millais has taken a step in the right direction, and a very long step. In this scene there is as much meaning as Smollett would have taken ten pages to express—the triumphs of the Roundheads, the utter discomfiture of the

Royalists, the ranging of godly soldiers up and down the land, smiting the men of Belial, hip and thigh, wherever they met with them; troopers in the churches, troopers in the old mansion-houses of the squires, Cromwell in the royal palaces, the fierce denunciation and longwinded expoundings of the sergeant in places that had for centuries echoed to the mildly spiritual, but withal vapid discourses of the parson; the cavaliers, beggars in foreign lands, of foreign bounty—their pride humbled, their boasting brought to nought—their prowess held in no more esteem than the blows of a child's flail on sturdy sheaves; heirs of proud families lurking in woods and fastnesses, with no hope and no refuge, save in the instinctive kindness of human nature—the love, the pity, the fidelity of those who knew them in better days. Do you mark the look of broken pride, of disappointed hope, of crushed ambition, the utter despair and prostration which dwells in the poor fugitive's face, as shipwrecked, worn-out, shorn of his fiery recklessness and ardour, he lurks in fear and trembling in this hollow trunk, in a park, it may be, where he once was the gayest of the gay, the glass of fashion and the mould of form, with his slashed doublet, his neat hose, his clanking spurs, his long hair, and waving feather, and jaunty swaggering air? This girl was a belle, no doubt, in peaceful times, a gay coquette, who broke hearts by the score, and ran men